



Jamaican**Canadian**Association

## **Update on Activities of the Working Group on the Future of JCA Annual General Meeting May 2013**

A committee formed late 2011 in response to a request by the membership to convene a meeting of the membership to discuss separation of social services and membership. Because recommendations from this working group will have significant implications on the future of JCA, the scope has expanded to ensure the four key areas of governance, membership, social services and volunteers are being reviewed and that any future model meets the membership & community's needs.

### **Members**

- Roy Williams
- Miah Bailey
- Kamala-Jean Gopie
- Erma Collins
- Audrey Campbell
- Sylvanus Thompson
- Herman Stewart
- Vincent Conville
- Paulette Crooks-Drummond
- Adaoma Patterson

On **June 14** 2012 we hosted a community forum entitled *if JCA Was Created in 2012, What Would it Look Like?* **More than 30 people participated.**

On **November 13** 2012 we hosted workshop #2 entitled *JCA – Path to the Next 50 Years*. The forum was intended to provide an update of this process, discuss the revisions to JCA's mission, vision & values, get better understanding of what events, initiatives and programs we should start/stop/continue. Based on feedback from participants, we revised our process to ensure members and the community has ample opportunities to inform this work. **More than 25 people participated.**

In early January 2013, an **on-line survey** was launched to get people feedback on the following questions:

- What is the mandate of the JCA & is there still a need for the JCA?
- Who should JCA serve & what does JCA need to do to keep you actively engaged?
- What activities would you like to see at the JCA?
- What are the social, economic and/or political issues JCA should address?
- Going forward, should the JCA continue to be a social services and membership organization?

**104 individuals completed the survey: 43 were non-members; 61 members for 1 – 50 years.**

On **January 19** we hosted workshop #3 which focused on three areas of the organization:

- Governance
- Social Services
- Membership

**Eighteen people participated.**

On **February 16** we hosted workshop #4 which focused on the results of the on-line survey and a discussion about 2 governance models. **Over 15 people participated.**

On **April 12** the Working Group met with Delford Blythe, JCA's financial/bookkeeping consultant to better understand the JCA's current financial position.

On May 22 & 25 we hosted workshops 5 & 6 respectively. The forums specifically provided a detailed review of where we began, 2 possible governance & organizational models as well as a new board structure. We heard loud & clear from participants that a recommendation must be made soon & implementation of the new structure begin immediately. **Over 20 people participated over the two days.**

#### **Additional Communication**

- Summaries of all of the forums are posted on [www.jcaontario.org](http://www.jcaontario.org).
- The Executive Secretary provides regular updates to the Board.
- The 2012 & 2013 February, May, August & November quarterly membership meetings have provided updates on the work of this committee.
- The August and November 2012 In Focus featured an article on the process.
- The Working Group and Board participated in a facilitated discussion October 2012 to discuss drivers for change and brainstorm on possible future roles for JCA.
- As the Board rep on the Social Services strategic planning process and this Working Group, the Executive Secretary has ensured both processes are aligned and connected.

#### **What We Heard – Key Themes**

##### **JCA is still relevant**

##### **There are high expectations to do all things**

##### **Internal & External communication is the issue**

##### **Branding confusion**

- There is strong desire for JCA to serve Jamaicans & other people of Caribbean descent
- There is a disconnect between who JCA should serve and the issues they advocate for which are those that affect primarily the Black community
- The building is under utilized
- The board is too operational & sometimes does not attract people with knowledge of fundraising or social services
- New people don't always feel welcome at JCA – new ideas and ways of doing things are not always embraced
- Social services is important because it is a tangible benefit to the community
- JCA needs to provide clear benefits for members
- Three themes emerged from the survey: a focus on youth, advocacy and social services

## Next Steps

The Working Group will provide an update to the Board at its June meeting.

The Working Group will ask for a **special membership meeting to be held on Thursday June 27 at 6:30 pm** at which time a recommendation will be put forward. Members will be given a detailed overview of the recommendation including financial and legal implications and a high level transition plan.

For more information, please see [www.jcaontario.org](http://www.jcaontario.org) or contact Adaoma Patterson at [execsec@jcaontario.org](mailto:execsec@jcaontario.org) or (647) 765-5304.